
Nepal is one of many Asian countries affected by the total solar eclipse on 22nd July 2009. Traditionally eclipses are thought to be unlucky but not everyone in Nepal thinks this eclipse is bad news. Joanna Jolly reports:

In Nepal, **eclipses** are traditionally considered bad luck and many people are already making preparations for any **ill-effects** that may accompany Wednesday's event. These students relaxing in the peaceful surroundings of Patan Durbar Square are cautious about how the eclipse will affect them:

(Student 1, female)

We heard that some kind of disaster will come after that.

(Student 2, male)

People say we shouldn't come out from home for this. It's very dangerous. We should not eat anything, we should not drink anything.

(Student 3, female)

I'm also a little bit curious because according to the **horoscope** of mine, maybe something new happens in my life like new studies or in professional areas.

In Kathmandu, popular TV **astrology** shows are reporting an increase in calls, with people asking whether the eclipse will mean years of bad luck and how to avoid it.

There are also traditional practices **outlining** what you should and should not do during an eclipse. Eating, drinking and sleeping are not advised. Pregnant women are told to stay **indoors**, just in case there's **an adverse effect** on their unborn child. And hospitals have reported that would-be parents have postponed scheduled **caesarean operations**, to ensure their children are not born **under bad omens**.

The best place to view an eclipse is considered to be in water and many people will travel to temples around the country to **immerse themselves** in holy streams and rivers. However, some Nepalis are ignoring tradition completely. One local airline is scheduled to fly over Mount Everest to ensure it gets the best view of the event.

Joanna Jolly, BBC News, Nepal

Vocabulary and definitions

eclipses	occasions when the sun disappears from view, either completely or partly (creating darkness), while the moon is moving between it and the Earth
ill-effects	bad or negative feelings or emotions
horoscope	description of what is going to happen to you, based on the position of the stars and planets at the time of your birth
astrology	the belief that the sun, moon and planets influence people's character and behaviour
outlining	giving the main facts about something
indoors	inside your house, not outside it
an adverse effect	a bad consequence or result
caesarean operations	medical operations which cut open a woman's womb so that a baby can be born
under bad omens	at unlucky times
immerse themselves	put themselves completely under water

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8161578.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/07/090722_witn_sunday_sail.shtml